CHAPTER XVI—(Continued.)

There was a moment's silence, and then some snickering and laughter. The girl's face was red with anger, but her voice was now quavering and quiet.

"What makes you think you can be the best one?" she said, her voice low but firm. "Well, you know, if you want to be the best, you've got to work for it. You can't just sit back and expect things to happen. You've got to put in the effort and the hard work.

"And you know, the best one isn't always the one who talks the most. Sometimes, it's the one who listens the most. So, I want you all to think twice before you speak. And remember, it's not just what you say, but how you say it. You've got to be respectful and polite, no matter what.

"And, most importantly, you've got to believe in yourself. You've got to believe that you can be the best. Because, believe me, when you believe in yourself, that's when you can really shine.

"So, let's get started. Let's prove to everyone that we can be the best. Let's make this a day of learning and growth and improvement. Let's be the best we can be, and together, we can achieve anything.

"Now, let's get to work."